



# UNIVERSAL WASTE

New state rules took effect on February 9, 2006 making it illegal for California residents to throw most consumer electronics, batteries, fluorescent light bulbs or other mercury-containing products in the garbage. The idea behind the rules is to reduce the lead, mercury, copper and other metals that can leach out when electronic devices are crushed in landfills -- polluting groundwater, streams and wildlife.

## Some examples of universal waste:

- **Common batteries-** Rechargeable, alkaline, NiCad, Lithium, silver button, and mercury batteries.
- **Fluorescent Tubes and Bulbs and other mercury-containing lamps.** These tubes and bulbs contain mercury vapor that may be released into the environment when they are broken.
- **Thermostats and thermometers.** There is mercury inside the old style thermostats, but not inside the newer electronic type of thermostats. Mercury thermometers also need to be kept out of the garbage.
- **Electronic Devices.** Electronics *such as* televisions and computer monitors, computers, printers, VCRs, cell phones, telephones, radios, stereo equipment, compact disc players, calculators, and microwave ovens. These devices often contain heavy metals like lead, cadmium, copper, and chromium.
- **Other mercury-containing devices such as:** electrical switches and relays; mercury gauges; pilot light sensors; mercury added novelties.

## What do you do with universal waste?

### Batteries

Household batteries can be put into zip lock type bags and put on or next to your recycle bin at the curb. All other batteries need to be brought to the Santa Clara County Household Hazardous Waste Program at (408) 299-7300.

### Fluorescent light bulbs and tubes

1. Johnson's Lumber in Morgan Hill will accept these from households only.
2. If you are a business, you need to call the Santa Clara County Household Hazardous Waste Program at (408) 299-7300. Residents may also use this program.

### Electronic items

1. Electronic items (**not including cell phones**) are acceptable at Western Recycling in Morgan Hill. Call (408) 779-1781 if you are not sure if they will accept your item.
2. Call the Santa Clara County Household Hazardous Waste program at (408) 299-7300.

### Televisions and computer monitors

1. Bring them to the San Martin Transfer Station at 14070 Llagas Ave., San Martin, for a fee.
2. Bring them to Western Recycling at 16290 Railroad Ave. in Morgan Hill for no charge.

### Mercury containing devices

To dispose of thermostats and thermometers, and other mercury-containing devices, call the Santa Clara County Household Hazardous Waste Program at (408) 299-7300.

To learn more about the Universal Waste regulations, check out the website for the Department for Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov). Click on Electronic Waste Recycling.

You may also visit Santa Clara County's website at [www.HHW.org](http://www.HHW.org).